

CLAIMS

Therefore, having thus described the invention, at least the following is claimed:

1. A system for providing access to a plurality of data media and adapted for use with a data storage system, the data storage system comprising a plurality of media storage devices for storing the plurality of data media, a data exchange device for exchanging data stored on the plurality of data media, and a media handling system for transferring the plurality of data media between the plurality of media storage devices and the data exchange device, the system for providing access comprising:

a bulk access apparatus configured to cover a plurality of openings in the data storage system, each of the openings providing access to one of the media storage devices; and

a locking mechanism configured to provide a first state in which the bulk access apparatus is securely attached to the data storage system and in which access to the plurality of openings is restricted, and a second state in which the bulk access apparatus is not locked to the data storage system and access to the plurality of openings is provided.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the bulk access apparatus comprises a hinged door that is attached to the data storage system.

1 3. The system of claim 1, wherein the bulk access apparatus comprises a removable
2 panel.

1 4. The system of claim 1, wherein the locking mechanism comprises a key lock.

1 5. The system of claim 4, wherein the key lock is attached to the bulk access
2 apparatus and a key latch is attached to the data storage system.

1 6. The system of claim 1, wherein the locking mechanism further comprises a
2 solenoid lock.

1 7. The system of claim 6, wherein the locking mechanism is attached to the data
2 storage system and a solenoid latch is attached to the bulk access apparatus.

1 8. A data storage system for handling and storing a plurality of data media, the data
2 storage system comprising:

3 a housing having a plurality of openings, each of the openings providing access to
4 one of a plurality of media storage devices, each media storage device operable to receive
5 a plurality of data media;

6 a media handling system configured to transferring the plurality of data media
7 between the plurality of media storage devices and a data exchange device;

8 a bulk access apparatus configured to cover a plurality of openings in the data
9 storage system, each of the openings providing access to one of the media storage
10 devices; and

11 a locking mechanism configured to provide a first state in which the bulk access
12 apparatus is securely attached to the data storage system and in which access to the
13 plurality of openings is restricted and a second state in which the bulk access apparatus is
14 not securedly attached to the data storage system and access to the plurality of openings is
15 provided.

1 9. The data storage system of claim 8, wherein the bulk access apparatus comprises a
2 hinged door that is attached to the housing.

1 10. The data storage system of claim 8, wherein the bulk access apparatus comprises a
2 removable panel.

1 11. The data storage system of claim 8, wherein the locking mechanism comprises a
2 key lock.

1 12. The data storage system of claim 11, wherein the locking mechanism is attached
2 to the bulk access apparatus and a key latch is attached to the housing.

1 13. The data storage system of claim 8, wherein the locking mechanism further
2 comprises a solenoid lock.

1 14. The data storage system of claim 13, wherein the locking mechanism is attached
2 to the housing and a solenoid latch attached to the bulk access apparatus.

1 15. A method for accessing a plurality of data media in a data storage system, the data
2 storage system comprising a plurality of media storage devices for storing the plurality of
3 data media, a data exchange device for exchanging data stored on the plurality of data
4 media, and a media handling system for transferring the plurality of data media between
5 the plurality of media storage devices and the data exchange device, the method
6 comprising the steps of:

7 unlocking a means for covering a plurality of openings in the data storage system,
8 each of the openings providing access to one of the media storage devices; and
9 providing access to the plurality of openings in the data storage system.